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Letters

Let us now demolish the entire CIA

Editor, *The Journal*:

The genesis of the Central Intelligence Agency, with a "Plans Directorate" (covert action, dirty tricks, etc.), was Bill Donovan's Office of Strategic Services — and the Special Operations Executive of the British.

Neither had much to do with any classic intelligence work. Their targets were of a more deadly and destructive nature. But we were in an all-out, regularly declared war with Nazi Germany. This state of war situation justified the OSS actions against the enemy.

But we are not in a state of war with any nation — nor have we been since War World II. Yet over this long expanse of time there has been governmental embarrassment and perilous national dangers that have resulted from CIA's Plans Directorate operations.

Setting up a peacetime OSS-like CIA was a grievous mistake — only surpassed in degree by keeping CIA in being over all the years that followed.

It is true that we needed a central authority, following World War II, to direct and coordinate the intelligence activities of the military services. But the last thing we

needed was to saddle this central authority for intelligence with a reprehensible and attention-getting dirty tricks component.

The Plans Directorate's often inept and inevitably backfiring operations bring absolutely unwanted and dangerous attention to our intelligence apparatus and its work of collecting information and producing intelligence. Equally dangerous is the known fact that CIA's Plans Directorate is in the business of propagating and spreading false information — thereby placing in doubt the validity of input to the nation's intelligence effort.

No one should be surprised, or shocked in the least, at the disclosure of the CIA manual produced for the Nicaraguan rebels. CIA Director Casey cannot easily target a few middle-management personnel as scapegoats for punishment. Such philosophies as murder and assassination are standard stock-in-trade for this ill-conceived CIA, still thinking and operating on a wartime basis against supposed national enemies.

What is to be done? The easily hoodwinked congressional oversight committees are incapable of controlling this national disaster. And they are going about it the wrong way.

The first thing is for the Congress to ask the fundamental question — which is not how do we control the CIA but why do we have such an organization in the first place? Then the answer, and the solution, become immediately clear. Disestablish the CIA, offering pensions or severance pay as appropriate. Then form a proper intelligence only apparatus under, say, the initial control of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Allow no one of any stature in the CIA to join the new organization as continuity of any kind is to be avoided at all costs.

As for the CIA headquarters building at Langley, let me offer a suggestion. Take it down, stone by stone, plow under the ground and cover the surface with salt. This building should not be allowed to survive as a painful memory of gross errors past.

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Editor's note: The author of this letter has served as an Army officer (1950-1953) and a senior civil servant (1954-1979) in various national level intelligence organizations from 1949 until retirement in 1979.